

CLASS OF 1809

EBENEZER GRIFFIN

Born in Cherry Valley, New York, July 29, 1789;  
Died in Rochester, New York.

Attended Union College, but did not graduate.

He was admitted to the bar in 1811, and practiced for eight years at Clinton, New York, and then at Utica until 1825, when he removed to New York City. In 1842 he went to Rochester, where he spent the rest of his life. He was one of the best known advocates of his day, being connected with the famous Morgan abduction case, in which he defended Mather, charged with conspiracy, obtaining his acquittal.

History of the Bench and Bar of New York Vol. 1 p. 340  
New York History Co.  
1897.

*Alumni*

*U. A. M.* 1809 *June 1938*

Mrs. Carlton F. Bown, a great granddaughter of EBENEZER GRIFFIN, has just sent us a family record sheet. Mr. Griffin was born in Cherry Valley and died in Rochester. He was the last City Recorder of Rochester (1845) and was counsel for the defense in the famous Morgan Trial. His reputation as a lawyer was state-wide and his eloquence was heard in many courts. He was the author of personal reminiscences of Aaron Burr.



# UNION COLLEGE ALUMNI RECORD

APR 28 1938

PLEASE FILL IN COMPLETELY AND RETURN TO:  
THE GRADUATE COUNCIL, UNION COLLEGE, SCHENECTADY, N. Y.

UNION DEGREE XX  
CLASS OF 1809

1. NAME IN FULL Ebenezer Griffin
2. SON OF (A) FATHER \_\_\_\_\_  
(B) MOTHER (MAIDEN NAME) \_\_\_\_\_
3. BORN (DATE) July 26 1789 (PLACE) Cherry Valley Otsego Co.
4. DIED (DATE) 1861 (PLACE) Rochester
5. MARRIED (HER NAME) Hannah Morrison (DATE) 1812  
(A) WIFE WAS BORN (DATE) 1813 (PLACE) Town of Paris Oneida Co  
(B) WIFE DIED (DATE) \_\_\_\_\_ (PLACE) \_\_\_\_\_

6. CHILDREN: NAME DATE OF BIRTH DATE OF DEATH

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	DATE OF DEATH
<u>Janet Morrison Griffin</u>	<u>1813</u>	<u>1877</u>
<u>Louisa Griffin</u>		

✓ his daughter Janet married E. Darwin Smith who was  
a distinguished Judge of the Supreme court for years

7. PREPARED FOR COLLEGE AT: \_\_\_\_\_
8. COLLEGE LIFE: (A) FRATERNITY MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_  
(B) LITERARY OR SOCIAL ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_  
(C) CLASS OFFICES \_\_\_\_\_  
(D) COLLEGE PRIZES AND HONORS \_\_\_\_\_

9. OTHER COLLEGES ATTENDED \_\_\_\_\_

10. DEGREES \_\_\_\_\_

11. PROFESSION Lawyer - admitted to Oneida Bar 1811

12. BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS HELD WITH DATES \_\_\_\_\_

Counsel for the defendants in famous Morgan Trial  
term of practice longer than any lawyer in Western N.Y.

13. MILITARY HISTORY AND TITLES moved to Rochester 1825

He was the last City Recorder in Rochester  
was elected City Recorder in 1845



14. PUBLIC OFFICES HELD WITH DATES.

City Recorder in Rochester 1845

15. MEMBER OF PROFESSIONAL, LITERARY, SCIENTIFIC, SOCIETIES.

16. LITERARY PRODUCTIONS, DATE AND PUBLISHER.

Personal reminiscences of Aaron Burr.

17. RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

Episcopal

18. POLITICAL PREFERENCE.

19. BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

20. RELATIVES OF SELF OR WIFE WHO HAVE ATTENDED UNION.

21. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. (USE THIS SPACE FOR OTHER BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OR TO SUPPLEMENT ANY OF THE ABOVE ANSWERS.)

22. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON THROUGH WHOM I CAN ALWAYS BE REACHED.

NAME STREET

CITY STATE

23. INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY

Mrs Carlton Bourne

STREET ADDRESS 1059 Harvard St

CITY AND STATE Rochester N.Y.

DATE



Mr. C. N. Waldron

Dear Sir

I am enclosing the Blank form that you sent me.

I have filled it in as well as could as I really have very little accurate data regarding his family

We have some beautiful photographs of the old Gilbert painting of my great grandfather and as soon as I can find one I will send it to you. It is such a handsome looking picture that we decided



he must have been a very good looking man -

Thank you for sending the Bills that he paid during his school terms at Union College. We have been very much interested to compare it with the Bills of a modern student in Union.

If you would send me any information you have regarding my great grandfather I would appreciate it very much. and will be very glad to supply you with any further information that I may get regarding his



antecedents

Thanking you very much  
for your courtesy in sending  
me the Bills

I remain yours very sincerely

Harriet S. Bown  
(Mrs Carlton F.)



April 28, 1938

My dear Mrs. Bown:

We are indebted to you for the Record Sheet on Ebenezer Griffin which you have returned to us. This will become part of the permanent files.

We are enclosing copy of all the other material we have in Ebenezer Griffin's folder, and hope that you will find something of interest in it.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary to Mr. Waddson

Mrs. Carlton F. Bown  
1059 Harvard St.  
Rochester, N. Y.



digested. It was lengthy, yet did not touch upon anything which could excite the fancy or please the imagination. It contained nothing but logic and learning; yet the court and the bar listened with deep and unwearied attention. The court sustained him in his view of the case, the judgment being pronounced by Chief Justice Savage. An appeal was taken to the Court of Errors, and the case was argued in December 1826. The argument of Mr. Griffin was superior even to that which he had made before the Supreme Court. He seemed to rise with the occasion, and to gain mental power as it was demanded, and he was again victorious. But his victory was purchased at a fearful expense. So great were his labors in preparation and trial, that a cerebral agitation soon followed, which, at times through life, quite unsettled his splendid mind.

Mr. Griffin continued to live in New York until 1842, when he removed to Rochester, and resided there until his death. This occurred on the 22nd of January, 1861, in his seventy-third year. Mr. Griffin was quite agreeable in his intercourse, was tall and heavy in person, weighing at least two hundred and twenty pounds, and yet quite prepossessing. Politically, he belonged to the famous high-minded gentlemen. His home here was on Broadway. His wife, to whom he was married in 1812, was Miss Hannah Morrison of Westmoreland, and in all his domestic relations he was fortunate and happy. One of his daughters was the wife of Judge E. Darwin Smith of Rochester.

<u>FROM</u>	The Pioneers of Utica M. M. Bagg Curtiss & Childs Utica 1877	pp. 492-494
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## EBENEZER GRIFFIN

Foremost among the individual notices for the year 1820, I introduce Ebenezer Griffin, a gifted lawyer, who for a few years adorned the bar of Utica, but removed so long since that not many of the present generation have any knowledge of him. The account I present is drawn almost wholly from the "Bench and Bar" of Proctor. He was born at Cherry Valley, July 29, 1789. While quite young he removed with his father to Clinton in this county, and there he was prepared for college. He entered Union, and soon gained the reputation of a close and thorough student. Desiring, however, to enter his chosen profession with as little delay as possible, he left college two years and a half after entering, and immediately commenced his legal studies with Mr. Hotchkiss of Clinton. The degree of A. M. was subsequently conferred on him by the authorities of Hamilton College. In due time he was prepared for the bar, and was admitted at the July term of the Supreme Court in 1811. He began practice at Clinton; but his growing reputation demanded a more extensive field, and in June 1820, he opened an office in Utica. In 1821, he was appointed Examiner and Master in Chancery. In April of the following year, he formed a business connection with William H. Maynard, succeeding therein to Mr. Talcott, just appointed Attorney General. While here, and still more after his removal to New York City, in 1825, he was engaged in a large and extensive practice. His reputation extended throughout the State, and his practice in the Court for the Correction of Errors, in the Supreme Court, and in the various circuits in the State, was equalled by few lawyers than at the bar. He seemed, says Proctor, almost ubiquitous; now in Buffalo, then at Bath, then at Albany, then at New York.

Among the many important cases in which he was retained, that of the Bank of Utica vs. Wager, tended most, as Mr. Proctor tells us, to increase and extend his reputation. It was tried at Utica, in November 1821, before Hon. Jonas Platt, circuit judge. Judge Platt ordered a verdict for the bank, subject to the opinion of the Supreme Court. It was argued before that tribunal in May 1824. Henry R. Storrs opened the argument for the plaintiff, and Joshua A. Spencer for the defence. Mr. Griffin made the closing argument for the defence. When he arose to address the court, many supposed the subject had been exhausted by Mr. Spencer, that whatever else might be said would be but the work of supererogation. A few moments, however, sufficed to convince all present that, as by intuition, Mr. Griffin had penetrated deeper into the subject, had more fully and logically grasped the great questions of the case than either of the other counsel. His argument was one of the most able, profound and elaborate ever heard at the bar of this State. Every authority bearing on the matter, whether American, English or French, was fully considered, examined and



Ebenezer Griffin

<u>Term ending</u>	Wood	Board	Tuition	Books	Total
Jul. 31, 1806		22.31	8.51		30.82
Dec. 24, 1806	5.00	27.01	8.51	2.00	42.52
Apr. 15, 1807	5.00	29.85	8.51	2.00	45.36
Jul. 29, 1807		24.46	8.51	2.00	31.08
Jan. 19, 1808	11.00	39.17	17.75	3.25	71.17

J. C. Brownell  
Collector

EBENEZER GRIFFIN, 1809 non-graduate, a resident of Paris, N.H., was a member of the Philomathean Society. He died in 1861.

Philomathean Catalogue 1830.



Griffin, Ebenezer  
From: Paris, N.Y.  
Last residence: Rochester, N.Y.

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Records show one  
Ebenezer Griffin  
Pvt. in Capt Orrin Gridley's Co.,  
Battalion 20th Regt (Hotchkiss') N.Y. Militia

Commencement of service: Aug 15, 1814

Expiration of service: Sept 3, 1814

Remarks: Residence, Oneida County.



Ebenezer Griffin

1809



Ebenezer Griffin

1809